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SUBJECT: REVISED PROCEDURES FOR COALITION PARTNERS
DEPARTING IRAQ VIA KUWAIT

1. This is an action message. See paragraph 4 below.

2. DCM, CONS Chief and OMC-K JAG met June 3 with Kuwaiti Chief of Immigration COL Abdullah Yousef Al-Ruwaieh and LTCOL Adeeb Al-Sweidan to discuss procedures which will allow CPA personnel currently in Iraq in an official capacity to depart via Kuwait. DCM explained to the Kuwaitis that large numbers of CPA personnel had transited Kuwait on their way to assignments in Iraq just prior to and during the war. Significant numbers of those personnel were now ready to depart but Baghdad International Airport remained closed, which requires them in many cases to fly out through Kuwait. The exigencies of the situation in Iraq and the details of their departures from Kuwait, however, had in many cases prevented these travelers from complying with Kuwaiti immigration law. This was particularly acute in the case of civilians who entered Kuwait via milair and who now needed to leave via Kuwait on commercial air. In many cases, these people did not have Kuwaiti stamps in their passports or the Kuwaiti stamps which were in their passports indicated that they had overstayed their legal limits in violation of Kuwaiti immigration laws. Fines were being levied and the U.S. sought jointly to establish with the Kuwaitis a solution to this problem. COL Al-Ruwaieh said the Kuwaitis wanted to be helpful. After considerable discussion, the following procedures were agreed:

a) Kuwait agrees that it will accept a letter from the Office of the Coalition Provisional Authority, duly stamped, which requests exemption from fines and fees for the bearer. Embassy is consulting with Kuwaitis now on acceptable language and will provide this language to OCPA in Baghdad as soon as it is confirmed. Embassy will also provide Arabic translation of the letter, and stands ready to have the letters printed in Kuwait if OCPA would find that useful.

b) Travelers who present these letters to Kuwaiti immigration authorities on the commercial side of the airport will be allowed to depart. Travelers should understand, however, that this process could take up to 24 hours, and they should be prepared to spend at least one night in a hotel.

c) For those travelers who are able to plan in advance, Kuwait Immigration requests that OCPA provide 24-hour notice via fax from Baghdad directly to Kuwait Immigration. Embassy will provide this fax number to OCPA as soon as the entire procedure is agreed with the Kuwaiti immigration authorities. For those people with this 24-hour notification, there should be minimal delay at the airport.

d) This CPA letter of transportation will be valid at either the Kuwaiti land border post at Abdalli and only at Abdalli, or at the airport if the traveler has flown milair into Kuwait from Iraq.

e) Those official travelers who do not present such letters will be turned around and returned to Iraq to secure the letter.

3. Embassy is proceeding along the lines above to ensure that future CPA travelers are able to meet Kuwaiti requirements. We have cleared this telegram with OCPA, which believes it to be a reasonable resolution of this thorny issue.

4. ACTION REQUEST: Kuwaitis have bent over backwards in completely waiving the normal requirements for transit through this country. We believe that this procedure should remedy the difficulties which travelers have been experiencing heretofore. We emphasize, however, that it is incumbent upon all travelers, journalists, DOD contractors and OCPA civilians to avail themselves of the letter from OCPA. Without it, Embassy will not be able to intervene to waive fees or otherwise to procure visas at the airport.

JONES